



**Advocacy for Patients  
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**Testimony of Jennifer C. Jaff, Esq.  
In Favor of Raised Bill No. 6600**

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of Sustinet, a plan for health care reform that will bring about universal coverage for all Connecticut residents.

We at Advocacy for Patients with Chronic Illness get calls and emails every day from people who had health insurance until they lost their jobs, who are going without necessary medication and treatment because they have to choose between that and paying their rent. All of the problems you hear about are compounded when talking about the chronically ill.

According to the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, 75 cents of every health care dollar spent in the United States goes to the cost of chronic illness. Thus, part of any health care reform effort must include chronic disease management.

There are two central premises on which a plan for chronic disease management should be based. First, for chronic disease management to work, it must be patient-centered. Patients who learn to navigate the system, practice shared decision-making with their doctors, and evaluate their care do obtain improved outcomes, and improved outcomes reduce cost.<sup>1</sup> "[P]atients with an array of chronic conditions who were enrolled in a comprehensive self-care management program experienced significant improvements in adherence to medical regimens . . . , health behavior change recommendations . . . , psychosocial and emotional distress caused by illness, self-reported health status, reduced occurrence of hospitalizations, and reduced costs of care."<sup>2</sup>

Around 90 percent of the care a person needs to manage a chronic disease

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<sup>1</sup> .H. Hibbard, "Engaging Health Care Consumers to Improve the Quality of Care," *Medical Care*, 41 (1), I-61-70, at I-63 (citation omitted).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* at I-65 (citations omitted).

must come directly from the patient. Evidence is growing that self-management interventions, such as self-monitoring and decision making, lead not only to improvements in health outcomes and health status, but also to increased patient satisfaction and reductions in hospital and emergency room costs.<sup>3</sup>

Raised Bill 6600 would manage chronic illness in an effective, patient-centered way, by creating a patient advisory committee that will help govern medical homes that will assist the chronically ill to monitor and manage their conditions; promote exercise, nutrition, tobacco cessation, and sleep; implement best practices to ensure compliance with medical directives; and provide for cultural competency and sensitivity. The medical home will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It will be the patient's point of entry into the health care system, where care will be coordinated, managed, and monitored. Raised Bill 6600 recognizes the value of patient participation by establishing a framework in which patients partner with their health care providers to manage their care. This not only will empower patients, but it will increase their compliance with physicians' orders, which will improve health outcomes, which, in turn, will reduce health care costs.

Second, we know that chronic illness does not end at the door to the medical office. Chronic illness affects finances, work, school, and social life. Raised Bill 6600 recognizes this by defining "care coordination" to include strategies to address stresses that arise in the workplace, home, school and the community, with referrals to employee assistance programs and other nonmedical services such as housing and nutrition programs, domestic violence resources, and other supports. The patient advisory board would have the ability to develop other community-based resources, like ours, which help people to navigate the insurance and legal systems through low-cost patient education and limited interventions. And cultural competence and sensitivity are ensured by this Bill.

These aspects of Raised Bill 6600 make it, in our view, superior to other proposals, including others pending before you. In short, Raised Bill 6600 "gets" chronic illness and the many challenges facing the chronically ill. We urge its passage and, in particular, the passage of Section 6, chronic disease management, fully intact.

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> California HealthCare Foundation, <<http://www.chcf.org/topics/chronicdisease/index.cfm?subtopic=CL613>>.